NUMB. XLIII.

The Prompter.

To be Continued TUESDAYS and FRIDAYS.

Love is the nobleſt Paſſion of the Mind,
The ſofteſt *Refuge* Innocence *can find,*
The ſafe *Director of* unguarded *Youth,*
Fraught *with kind* Wiſhes, *and ſecur'd by Truth:*
The Cordial Drop *Heav'n in our* Cup *has thrown,*
To make the bitter Draught *of Life go down.* ROCH.

TUESDAY, APRIL 8. 1735.

I AM ſorry, for the Sake of both Sexes, to obſerve, that Love in an *Oriental* Breaſt, makes a nobler Figure than in an *European*. In *England*, we confine that Paſſion within a very narrow Compaſs, and have none of thoſe *elevated* Notions that poſſeſs the Eaſtern World, and carry their Actions to ſuch a Height of Dignity, that our COOL Reaſon queſtions the Poſſibility of what we admire in them. If one ſhould venture to aſſert, in theſe Northern Climates, that there may be Circumſtances, in which it wou'd ſhew the tendereſt Paſſion in the Lover, to give his Miſtreſs up to his Friend, and to uſe Arguments with her, to conſent to become his Friend's; I ſhould be immediately anſwer'd, That the Man who cou'd conſent to ſuch an Action, and perſuade the Woman that loves him to conſent to it, is no Lover at all.

IN our Conceptions of Love, we baniſh all thoſe generous, and noble Sentiments, that overlook the narrow Gratifications of Paſſion, whether it ſhews itſelf in *ſenſual* Deſires, or the Inclination of *being* together, when the more *laſting* and *extended* Happineſs of the Object beloved comes in Competition with it. An *Eaſtern Lover* conſiders, with ſo much *paſſionate Fondneſs*, the Happineſs of his lov'd Miſtreſs, that he quite forgets his own. He *voluntarily* becomes a Sacrifice, goes to *Slavery*, or *Death*, if ſuch is the *fatal Circumſtance*, provided, either by his *Death* or *Slavery*, he can ſecure her much *dearer Happineſs to him*. — He reſiſts her Intreaties to ſhare one common Fate, and inſiſts, as a Proof of her Paſſion for him, that ſhe ſhou'd leave him to drink the bitter Cup alone, and *tranſfer all the Love ſhe had for him, to his Friend*, whoſe happier Lot enables him to enjoy that *Fullneſs* of *Bliſs* he had flatter'd himſelf with in her charming Society.

A Struggle like this, has ſomething in it, that awakens every Power in the human Soul. *Great Paſſions* alone ſhew *great Minds*, and a *generous Reſignation* of one's own *Happineſs*, has more of true *Tenderneſs* in it, than an *obſtinate Perſeverance* that involves *what we love* in our *Deſtruction*. Ev'ry body can act a right Part in the *Calms* of Life, where nothing ruffles the Paſſage; but in ſuch a *Storm* as this, that ſhakes the *very Foundations of Nature*, how *hard*, how *nice*, to ſteer CONSISTENTLY!

I have been led into theſe few Reflections, on reading a Story related by a *Perſian* here to his Friend at *Iſpahan*, in a Letter wrote from hence, among ſeveral others lately publiſhed.

TO give theſe, of Readers whoſe Genius leans towards this Paſſion, a full and lively Impreſſion of the generous *Perſian's* Behaviour, I ſhall tranſcribe Part of that Letter here, that paints the unfortunate Lovers in ſo diſtreſsful and tender a Light.

SELIM *to* MIRZA, *at* Iſpahan.

From London.

" THAT *Abdallah*, whom I mention'd in a Letter, is gone from *England*; thou wilt be affected with the Virtue of the Man, when I tell thee the Cauſe of his Departure. He ſent, laſt Week, to deſire I wou'd come to him; I came, and found him oppreſt with the deepeſt Sorrow. Ah! *Selim*, ſaid he to me, I muſt leave thee; I muſt go, and diſcharge my Duty to the beſt of Fathers; I muſt give my All for him to whom I owe it. At theſe Words, he put a Letter into my Hand, which he had juſt received the Day before: I found by it, that his Father, who was a Merchant, in a Voyage from *Grand Cairo* to *Aleppo*, was taken by a Cruizer of the Iſle of *Malta*, and being unable himſelf to pay his Ranſom, had writ to his Son to do it for him. Thou knoweſt, ſaid he to me, that I am not rich: To raiſe the Sum demanded for my Father's Liberty, I muſt ſell all my Effects, and leave myſelf without the Means of a Subſiſtence, except what my Labour can procure me. But my own Diſtreſs is not what concerns me moſt: The Fear of Poverty cannot frighten me from my Duty; I only grieve for the Fate of my poor Wife, whom the Ruin of my Fortune will expoſe to Indigence and Shame. 'Tis for her ſake that I have ſent for you; and I conjure you, by all our Friendſhip, by the Prophet and the God whom we adore, not to refuſe me the firſt Favour I ever ask'd. —— When he had ſaid this, he open'd the Door of another Room, where I ſaw a beautiful Woman in the *Turkiſh* Habit, who, with a Modeſty peculiar to our *Eaſtern* Ladies, endeavour'd to conceal herſelf from my Regards. Come hither *Zelis*, ſaid my Friend, and ſee the Man whom I have choſen to protect you: See him who muſt ſhortly be your Huſband in the Room of the unfortunate *Abdallah*. Then turning to me, and weeping bitterly, This, cry'd he, O *Selim!* is the Grace for which I am a Suppliant; Permit me to give her

" to

" to a Man who I know will uſe her well; I am re-
" ſolv'd to divorce her this very Inſtant, according to
" the Power allow'd me by our Law, if you will
" conſent to take her for your Wife. If the Charms
" of her Perſon are not ſufficient to recommend her
" to you, know that her Mind is ſtill fairer and more
" accompliſh'd. I brought her with me into *Eng-*
" *land* Three Years ago, in all which Time, ſhe has
" hardly ſtirr'd out of my Houſe, nor deſir'd any
" Company but mine. It is impoſſible to be happier
" with a Wife, than I have been with her: Nothing
" ſhou'd ever have prevail'd on me to part with her,
" but the Deſire to ſeparate her from my Misfortunes,
" and to procure her a Maintenance agreeable to her
" Birth and Merit, which I am no longer able to pro-
" vide for her myſelf.

" He had ſcarce ended, when the Lady, tearing
" her Hair, and beating the whiteſt Breaſt I ever ſaw,
" implored him not to think of a Separation, more
" painful to her than any Miſery that Poverty cou'd
" reduce her to.

" After many paſſionate Expreſſions of her Love,
" ſhe declared, that ſhe wou'd accompany him to
" *Malta*, and beg her Bread with him afterwards, if
" it was neceſſary, rather than ſtay behind in the moſt
" affluent Condition. But he poſitively refuſed to let
" her go, and inſiſted upon giving her to me, as the
" only Expedient to make him eaſy. I continued ſome
" time a ſilent Witneſs of this extraordinary Diſpute;
" but at laſt, ſeeing him determin'd to divorce her,
" I told him, I wou'd accept her as a Treaſure com-
" mitted to my Hands, not for my own Uſe, but to
" ſecure it for my Friend: That ſhe ſhou'd remain
" with me under the Character of my Wife, but I
" wou'd always be a Stranger to her Bed; and if, at
" his Return, he found himſelf in Circumſtances
" ſufficient to maintain her, I wou'd reſtore her back
" again to him, untouch'd; or, in caſe they ſhou'd
" mutually deſire it, carry her with me to my *Seraglio*
" in the *Eaſt*."

The Difference between Love in the Eaſtern World and in ours, is this: With them, Love *gives Life and Vigour* to ev'ry generous Sentiment of Virtue the Mind of Man is capable of; with us, it *kills* them. Ev'ry Tie of Nature, or of Friendſhip, with them, is inforced by their Paſſion; with us, *leſſened*. The more they love their Miſtreſs, the more Reverence they conceive for their Parents, the more Regard for their Friends. With them, Love, like the invigorating Spring, calls forth ev'ry latent Virtue, and gives it Action and Energy; with us, like Winter, it chills the Seeds of ev'ry Sentiment of exterior Virtue; the more we love our Miſtreſſes, the leſs Reverence we retain for our Parents, the leſs Regard for our Friends. It *mines* ev'ry Paſſion but itſelf, and is never the Source of any generous Action that does not relate to the Object it confines itſelf to.

How few, like *Abdallah*, bleſt with an Affluence of Fortune, and happy in the Poſſeſſion of a Woman he lov'd to Exceſs, and from whom he met as kind a Return, could give up, ſo *ſteadily*, Both, to redeem an aged Parent from Captivity! How many *cogent* Reaſons wou'd a Northern Lover find to prove the Tie to his Miſtreſs yet greater than to him that gave him Life.—" He can live but a few Years, his
" Life too is worn to the very Dregs. — Shall I give
" up the Happineſs of one in the Prime of Life, and
" the Criſis of Paſſions? Shall I expoſe her and my-
" ſelf to Poverty and Want? Or, Shall I (harder
" yet!) give her to the Hands of another? Diſtract-
" ing Thought! Shall he taſte thoſe Beauties that
" give me Pleaſures beyond Expreſſion? Or enjoy
" that Society which left me nothing to wiſh for?
" I wou'd ſave my poor Father, but what Right have
" I to make her wretched!

What does the more generous, and more tender *Perſian* do! He conſiders throughly the firſt Tie of Nature,— then reflects, that by giving up his All, he reduces himſelf and Wife to Miſery and Want. That Thought he can't bear; the only Remedy to ſave her from that, was, to give her (as his Law allow'd) to his deareſt Friend, who had every thing he *wanted*. —To engage his Friend to receive her — he enumerates her many good Qualities. — " If the Charms
" of her Perſon are not ſufficient to recommend her
" to you, know that her Mind is ſtill fairer, and more
" accompliſhed. — I brought her to *England* Three
" Years ago, in all which time ſhe has hardly stirr'd
" out of my House, *nor deſir'd any Company but*
" *mine*."—The very Tenderness ſhe had for him, becomes a *Motive*, in his great Mind, for *parting* from her.—Generous *Abdallah!* Yet happier in thy Manly Tenderness, than in the *Poſſeſſion* of thy *much lov'd* Zelis! But this was not the hardeſt Conflict!

" He had ſcarce ended, when the Lady, tearing
" her Hair, and beating the Whiteſt Neck I ever
" ſaw, implored him not to think of a Separation,
" more painful to her *than any Miſery that Poverty*
" *cou'd reduce her to*."

Abdallah thought otherwiſe, and determin'd to feel nothing but the *generous* and *noble* Part of Love, wou'd give no way to the ſofteſt Pleadings, of *Inclination*, *Fondneſs*, or *Deſire*.

The Compaſſionate Part of my Readers will have obſerved, with Pleaſure, that before *Abdallah*'s Departure, the Generoſity of his Friend took off the greateſt Part of his Concern; and the Sequel of the Story rewards his Filial Piety, by re-uniting him at laſt to his belov'd *Zelis*.

The Uſe that I wou'd have both Sexes draw from this Tale, ſhou'd be, to make the happy State of Mind that Love throws them into, *an inward Nurſery of generous and noble Sentiments with reſpect to ev'ry thing round them*, and not, as it but too often happens, a Contracted Habit of Mind, that conſiders *nothing out of the Sphere of its own private Happineſs*.

P †

The following Advertisement is juſt come to hand.

Whereas it was invidiouſly reported, in a Paper called The Weekly Miſcellany, *that Senor* C. B. F—r—o *was to have ſung at* St. James's *Church, for the Benefit of the poor Children of that Pariſh; Theſe are to certify, that he never had any ſuch Intention; and that it is a high Inſult done him, to ſuppoſe he cou'd be ſo* criminal, *as to proſtitute his* Roman Catholick *Voice, to raiſe Charity for* Protestant Boys *and* Girls. C. B. F.

Erratum in N°. XLI.

For *practical Merchandizes* read *poetical Merchandizes*.

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